

compliance may be achieved by allowing the public to know who is legally required to file tax returns, but does not file tax returns,

4. the interrelationship of the taxpayer confidentiality provisions in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with provisions in other Federal law, including 5 U.S.C. 552a (commonly known as the Freedom of Information Act),

5. the impact on taxpayer privacy of the sharing of income tax return information for purposes of enforcement of state and local tax laws other than income tax laws, including the impact on the taxpayer privacy intended to be protected at the Federal, state, and local levels under Public Law 105-35, the Taxpayer Browsing Protection Act of 1997, and,

6. whether the public interest would be served by greater disclosure of information relating to tax-exempt organizations described in section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Request for Public Comment

The Department of the Treasury invites comments relative to the six topics described. In particular, the Department of the Treasury invites comments with respect to the following:

1. How is the privacy protection provided by section 6103 beneficial to taxpayers?

2. How is the section 6103 statutory scheme burdensome for taxpayers? Does section 6103 affect the IRS's ability to deliver quality customer service and, if so, in what ways?

3. Is the statutory structure and/or administration of section 6103 consistent, simple, administrable, and fair? What changes, if any, should be made to the content and/or administration of section 6103?

4. What is the relationship between taxpayer confidentiality as provided by section 6103 and compliance with the internal revenue laws? What effect, if any, might publishing the names of nonfilers have on compliance with the internal revenue laws? What effect, if any, might broadening the scope of permissible disclosures have on compliance with the internal revenue laws?

5. What impact has technology had on the protection of taxpayer privacy and what, if any, additional safeguards may be necessary as a result? As the IRS moves toward electronic filing and maintenance of tax records, what, if any, changes should be made to the confidentiality rules under section 6103?

6. What impact have taxpayer privacy protections had on the ability of federal, state, and local agencies to receive information critical to their operation, particularly information not easily obtainable from other sources?

7. Should tax information be used for nontax purposes? If so, what factors should influence whether agencies and others should be permitted direct access under section 6103 to taxpayer information for nontax purposes? What factors should influence whether agencies and others should be allowed to obtain such information by consent from the taxpayer, for example, as a condition to approval of mortgages or other loans, or for obtaining government benefits? Should there be any conditions or restrictions on the recipient's use of tax information obtained by consent?

8. What factors should influence whether federal, state, or local agencies that receive tax information to carry out particular programs, and who use private contractors for data processing and other services, should be permitted to disclose tax information to those contractors for the purpose of performing those programs?

9. What changes, if any, should be made to either the safeguard program or the consent process?

10. What, if any, additional restrictions should be placed on the ability of those who receive tax information to redisclose the information to other parties? What means should be used to implement any such redisclosure protections?

11. How can taxpayer privacy concerns and a desire for more information-sharing within government be balanced?

12. Would the public interest be served by allowing greater sharing of information between the IRS and other federal and state agencies for joint investigations relating to the enforcement of federal and

state laws affecting tax-exempt organizations? What restrictions, if any, should be imposed on use of the information by those agencies?

13. Do the public inspection provisions of section 6104 and section 6110 provide adequate disclosure of IRS determinations affecting tax-exempt organizations? If not, what additional information should be made available?

14. Is the information currently reported by tax-exempt organizations to the IRS adequate to ensure effective oversight? If not, what additional information should be reported? Should there be more detailed disclosure regarding transactions between tax-exempt organizations and their subsidiaries or other affiliates?

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Reporting Requirements of Tax-Exempt Owners of Disregarded Entities

Announcement 99-102

On January 13, 1997, final regulations under section 7701 of the Internal Revenue Code pertaining to the classification of certain business organizations under an elective regime were published in the Federal Register. See 26 C.F.R. 301.7701-1 *et seq.* These regulations provide that an entity wholly owned by a single owner may be disregarded as an entity separate from the owner. When an entity is disregarded as separate from its owner its operations are treated as a branch or division of the owner. Therefore, an owner that is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code must include, as its own, information pertaining to the finances and operations of a disregarded entity in its annual information return. Accordingly, the instructions to the 1999 Forms 990, 990-EZ, 990-T, and 990-PF will be modified.

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